

Israeli/Palestinian Debacle: Western Posturing and Israeli Disproportionality in the 21st Century, A Sword of Damocles?

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Abstract

This study was carried out to assess the place and depth of western posturing and Israeli disproportional response to the ongoing Palestinian/Israeli intractable conflict. Just as the October, 7th 2023 Hamas attack realistically introduced and deepened the grievances and unfolding scenario within this area, quite aware that variegated enormous energy, time and resources have been expended pursuing the highly elusive peace, to no avail, this study while recognizing a host of other secondary contributing contentions on the ground, primarily identify and accuse the stance and actions of the United States and its allies as the major obstacle to this much needed peace. While utilizing the historical analysis tool, the study gravitated into the Conflict Trap Theory by extension. In supporting the study's assertion, findings revealed not only the reverberating effect of this conflict on the international level, but the unfair detailed encumbrances and support provided by the western powers for Israel, against the Palestinians, driven by diverse interests. How could peaceful restoration on fair principles be attained, when the United States, an umpire in the issue vehemently deploys its resources, influence and its United Nations veto power to prevent the aversion and recognition of Palestine as a UN recognized state, and by implication opposing the proposed popular two-state solution to the crisis? Israeli cumulative blatant disregard of International Law, including the United Nations directives on this prolonged conflict remains a novel issue. Dubbed by the US as the strongest democracy in the Middle East, dwelling on the multiplicity of support from the all-powerful mainstream news media, including the Western governments, steady supply of various military hardware and intelligence, one may understand why Israel's presenting egoistic platform may not allow it condescend into certain national compromises in pursuit of peace. The paper would want to address this issue; Is Israel above the law? In analysing Israel's toxic legacy in Palestine, emboldened by the West through contradictions and fabricated narratives, the paper argues that rather than reprisals and campaign dictated by Zionist extremism, the embers fanning Israel's ego and disproportionate responses should be checkmated to venture an empathic understanding, hence diminishing Israel's stereotypic genocidal responses. However, if not peace, could both contending parties be heading for a disastrous existential solution? The West could do better by adjusting its faulty posture which is detrimental to lasting peace.

Keyword: Posturing, Proportionality, Zionist, Hamas, Genocide

Introduction

'I must retrace my steps and must deprive those who wage war of nearly all the privileges which I seemed to grant, yet didn't grant to them. Far when I first set out to explain this part of the law of nations, I bore witness that many things are said to be lawful' or 'permissible' for the reason that they are done with impunity, in past also because coercive tribunals lend to them their authority, things which nevertheless, either deviate from the rule of right (whether this has any basis in law strictly so called, or with administrations of other virtues), or at any rate may be omitted on higher grounds and with greater praise among good men (Grotius: Dejure Belli ac Paris, Book 3)

History has and will continue to record the cruelty of war through its dramatic unfolding encyclicals of destruction, suffering and death. The Palestinian/Israeli conflict is the nucleus of the Middle East contentious issues, emitting global terrorism on the one hand as supported by extremist ideologies and militant Islam, and on the other, petro-dollar politics accompanied with the vagaries of the military-industrial complex. Proud to have given birth to three great worlds religions – Judaism, Christianity and Islam, the Middle East has continued to remain a global relevant melting pot in security and eco-social

developmental needs. Inundated so to say, with an interesting amalgam of strong and stubborn disparate nationalities/culture groups, and indoctrinated through centuries rich history, genealogy, values and stereotypes; extremism, sectarianism and fundamentalism have remained fashionable delivery tools across the many contiguous national borders crisscrossing that region.

Devoid of old rivalry, the present Palestinian/Israeli conflict being a product of post-World War I manifests its legal footing from the 1917 Balfour Declaration, just as many Jewish immigrants have started establishing settlements within Palestine. For some Jews, abject hunger for a homeland fired them into a steady exodus back to Palestine, hence altering the demographic ratio of Palestinians to Jews in Palestine; more so, aided by the global sympathy felt by many nations on the plight of the Jews post the cumulative events of the World War II holocaust. The United Nations facilitated the creation of the State of Israel in 1948, thereby partitioning Palestine. Israel's sovereignty was asserted by its victory against the Palestinian/Arab population who fought hard to stop this development. Since then, the Middle East landscape has been dotted by protracted intermittent episodes of violence, attacks and wars, steered by extreme positions and hardline. Multiple attempts at peaceful resolution through diplomacy have colossally failed sequel to the mutual reluctance of both not to compromise or sacrifice agelong grudges.

Moreover, attempts at solution through the auspices of the international community (collective security) like the United Nations have failed woefully. The United States and its western allies stand complicit in this development, hence has "compromised the potential for a harmonious and successful future for both Israeli and Palestinian populations" (Cottle S., 2009); threatening spill-over repercussions that may portend regional to global disaster, if the trending transnational strategic linkages is anything to go by. In 1967, the 6-days Arab/Israeli war led to the Israeli occupation of the West Bank, East Jerusalem and Gaza strip. In brief, these were the beginning of the half-century of strife in the Middle East that has come to be known as the Palestinian-Israeli conflict (Peterson N., 2014). Both have remained trapped in a destructive spiral of violence which portrays in most cases Israel as the victim and the attacker. A worrisome scenario indeed and equally paradoxical if civilian deaths, destroyed homes and the number of displaced people are randomly checked, at the punctuative end of these conflicts. From *Intifadas* to the Gaza wars; the UN's Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) reports the total number of casualties between 2008 and 2020 as 5, 953 Palestinians and 262 Israeli fatalities (UNOCHA, 2021). Beside the violence, the Israeli government established a Jewish settlement, program and a network of Jewish-only roads (Harms & Ferry, 2012). This has led to over a million Palestinians becoming refugees (UNRWA, 2021). According to the United Nations, Israel's establishment of settlements in the Palestinian territory, occupied since 1967, is a violation under international law (UNOCHA, 2021).

Unfortunately, the complexities of the Palestinian/Israeli impasse have bedevilled on countries to affect the continental system negatively. In the heat of such incredible polarizations, by December 2020, 'out of a total number of 193 UN member states, 165 officially recognize Israel' (<https://en.m.wikipedia.com>), while of the same 193 member states of the UN, as at April, 2024, 140 have recognized the state of Palestine (<https://en.m.wikipedia.com>). Be that as it may, the caveat is that the United Nations bowing to the US and Western apron strings has successfully not allowed Palestine to be admitted and recognized as a fully-fledged official member of this comity of nations up till date. It may be recalled that the political equation manifested by the 1949 armistice ending the first war, saw Israel controlling over 80% percent of Palestine, hence encroaching on the lands allocated to the Arabs by the partition plan, whereby many Palestinians were forced to flee into neighbouring countries. Faced with dismay, the Palestinians found it difficult to present a common formidable front and force against a much more compact, consolidated and robust Israeli nation. Suffering from lack of established identity even amongst its fellow Arabs, the nascent Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO) under Yaser Arafat appeared to face more serious challenges when in the ensuring 6-days war in 1967, Israel captured and took over Gaza from Egypt and the West Bank from Jordan. Falling out with their hosts in Jordan and embroidered into an unfortunate civil war in 1970, Palestinian militants not only lost out,

but had to relocate to southern Lebanon, where they were sandwiched between the Israeli forces and their Lebanese adversaries already engaged in a civil war. Amidst sustained deadly attacks and counter attacks by Israel, Palestinian militants (PLO) and Lebanese-based Shia groups, in the light of the glimmer of hope shown by the Egyptian/Israeli Peace Treaty of 1982, energized effort on the international realm and gave ground to the 1993 Oslo Accord, establishing the Palestinian national authority, and hence allowing it to relocate from Tunisia, to physically govern the West Bank and Gaza strip. Perhaps one might note that getting this far with the Palestinian authority (PLO) under Yasar Arafat and the Israeli government under Prime Minister Rabin wasn't at all easy, amidst tangible disturbances and distractions from extremists and hardliners on both sides, who vehemently opposed paths of resolutory peaceful settlement. Rabin was not only assassinated, but the newly elected Israeli government responding to pressure, withdrew from the Accord in 1996, and the following years of unsuccessful understanding between the Palestinians and Israelis, resulted in the September 2000 *Intifada*, smouldering into 2005, 'causing 130 fatalities and Israel disengaging from Gaza' (Harry & Farm, 2010).

In 2006, in order to fill the political vacuum, Hamas contested and won a plurality of 44 percent in a Palestinian parliamentary election. Israel demanded that Hamas accept previous agreement between Palestine and Israel, forswear violence and most importantly, recognize the right of Israel to exist (Holocambe, 2017). Relatively radical in approach with extremist tendencies, more so with financial and political support from Iran, Hamas recanted; violence erupted and just as Hamas regained full control of Gaza, Israel responded with the imposition of land and naval blockade of Gaza, with the help of Egypt. Israel launched several military operations in Gaza in 2008 and by February, 2009, with the help of many influential international negotiators, a contentious cease fire was signed. Since then, amidst several violent episodes engaging the two, in the light of the continued sustenance of land, air and naval blockade of Gaza by Israel, Palestinian leaders have continued to question the nature of Israeli withdrawal from the occupation of Gaza. Again, the various Israeli illegal settlements in the occupied areas have continued to enlarge and widen, against expectations and international law.

The Palestinian authority's attempts in 2011 to gain UN membership as a full sovereign state was thwarted by the US's veto wand in the Security Council. Israeli sporadic raids in Gaza and Hamas firing of barrages of rockets into Israel appeared to be a re-occurring incident. In November 2012, Palestine's representation in the UN was upgraded to a non-member observer state, hence its mission title was changed from Palestine (represented by PLO) to State of Palestine (Meier, 2014). Unbelievably, October 7th, 2023 starred Hamas fighters offensively attacking Israel asymmetrically through pseudo-surgical operations. Considering the level of this attack, its success rate, the timing, the nature of the existing government in both Israel and Washington, the impact of such a devastating attack on the portrayed invincibility and ego of the Israeli country, including the reverberating implication and message to the Arabic and Islamic world, a worst case scenario actually dawned on the region. Unconventionally delivered and terror-laden, the Hamas group went for the Israeli jugular, realistically prepared, one may say, for a prolonged urban warfare with Gaza confines, quite aware what and how Israeli response would be. While the Israeli leadership collectively vowed the extermination of Hamas from Gaza, the US and its western allies reiterated Israel's right of defense, citing international law. However many world leaders, urged, caution. In support of absolute victory vowed by Prime Minister Netanyahu of Israel, Biden, the US President staged a steady rhetorical support for Israeli offensive engagements, cautioning and warning Iran to stay clear. By the 6th of Nov. 2023, a second US aircraft carrier and strike group of over 2, 000 marines have taken positions in the Mediterranean, near Israel (www.wanens.com). For now, much of Gaza is levelled, while many innocent civilians, women, children and journalists have deliberately been exterminated, all in the guise of destroying Hamas, and the defense of oneself. Still counting, over 36,000 lives of Palestinian civilians and children have been lost to both military bombardment and deliberate starvation strategy.

Emboldened by the agelong US posturing and support, through the steady supply of western genocidal weapons, tools and technology, Israel an occupier force, a victim and attacker at the same time cannot

be afraid of any consequences, because they have never faced any, post 1948. This disproportionate Israeli response has been growing in propensity over time, and the following aggregate factors continues to lend to its sustenance – the idea of Zionism, the mainstream news media, Israel’s victim identity, Shia-Arabism, and most importantly, the US and allied western posture and support.

Conceptual Base

Posturing

When one signals or manifests an exaggerated pose or attitude, meant for or directed at a particular audience or meant for a definite purpose, such an individual could be designated as posturing. Posturing, in its very depth, overrides mere propaganda, hence involves more of tangential assessment based on factual ability and evidence, hence in its predictive value, within the sphere of relationships amongst nations and sovereignties, strategic posturing remains an important duty and analogy required of diplomats and defense attaches, when posted to a community, hence they;

Are expected to give a fresh assessment of that country’s strategic posture. The term strategic posture is used here to encompass not only the country’s military- personnel, equipment; bases and other infrastructure- but also its political-strategic alignment. (friendly? Neutral? Potential rival/adversary?), its overall attitude to war, and its spirit (as one used to say), or collective culture and mentality. Such analysis is crucial for the determination of one’s own larger overall strategy and, as a part of that, one’s approach toward this country and its government (Beatrice Heuser, ndupress.ndu.edu, JFQ110, 3rd Quarter, 2023).

Proper understanding of a people or country must entail knowledgeable information gathered and synthesized in its geography, resources, economy, trade, population propensities, historical experiences, constitutional powers, cultural values, alliances and obligations including adversaries and ambitions’ (Beatrice Heuser; 2023), hence a collective or wholistic mentality. Timing, strategic advantage and a host of other factors help to determine when and the nature of political posturing an entity will present at a given situation, though in some peculiar situations, intentionally against its national interest. Ingenious inertia appears to drive posturing better on the political arena, such that overwhelming evidence and facts abound in the open, backing the capabilities and propensities of individual states, not disregarding the pedigree of their present leadership. So long as varied interests and issues bother different states domestically and nationally, as long as capabilities continue to differentiate and demarcate entities on the international system, need must always out class want, hence outward manifestations may in reality be a deliberate decoy in problem-solving. Posturing has been, and would continue to be a handy tool in politicking, more so amongst nations, or else the designate tools of diplomatic routine and contact would remain deficient.

Quite important and informing as strategic posturing has proved, especially when supported by proven designate abilities, strategic deterrence and deceit may sometimes present as alluring targets. Sometimes, what is meant for public consumption (grandstanding) could contradict the real position of the posturer. Within the military circle, mere utterances may not tally with the posture on the ground, hence, prior to the launching of the Special Military Operations (SMO) by Moscow, a very wide convergence was presented on the ground between the official government responses to the international press, indicating no official intention or plans of invading Ukraine, *vis a vis* the presenting posture on the borders of the two countries, showcasing a simultaneous military build-up. Posture intentionally taken for a particular purpose could as well be defused, dismantled or shortchanged as the situation demands, hence remains a relevant strategic tool.

Posturing may not be effectively weaponized and precise without information, planning and re-planning, such that updates remain crucial decimals to the choice of the most important gait in time and place. On the 5th of November, 2023, an Israeli government minister declared that ‘nuclear attack on Gaza is an

option' (NewArab.com; 2023), just as the Israeli Defence Force kept on pounding Gaza relentlessly. Amichai Ehiyahu, the Minister for Heritage in Israeli government since 2022, 'likened Palestinians to the Nazis...' and openly endorsed collective punishment, proclaiming that since they wouldn't have provided humanitarian aid to the Nazis 'there is no such thing as uninvolved people in Gaza' (NewArab.com, 2023). One may not easily dismiss the outburst of such a minister as sentimentally preposterous if one is to evaluate and weigh the degree and depth of public vows both the Israeli Prime Minister, Benjamin Netanyahu and some in his war cabinet have taken bent on extinguishing Hamas in Gaza. Excellent postures of the ongoing war target on the part of Israel, one may say, sequel to the momentary and temperamental anger most especially bequeathed on the Israeli excellent invulnerability ego by the underrated Hamas October 7th attack. Putting a check on the several Israeli political posturing so to say, led Turkey's foreign minister, Hakam Fidan to slam Israel for using a narrative over nuclear weapons in the context of the ongoing offensive against Gaza, and called for the de-nuclearization of the Middle East to avoid a possible nuclear arms race (Middle East Monitor. Com. 18th Nov. 2023). Yes, Israel is a nuclear armed state, but whatever prospective fallout Israel may have been expecting from such vituperative posturing, may have been put in check by the Turkish response.

Proportionality

The word proportionality is a term used to explain and gauge one's response in both civilian, legal and military platforms. A response could rather than be proportional, end up being under or excessive, and as a potent analogy better utilized and understood in the context of self defense, it protects the aggressor by limiting the force used in response to the unlawful threat: only measures that are genuinely necessary to eliminate the threat are permissible (JINSA: <https://www.lawfire.com>, Blog 2023). Proportionality as a concept has continued to be explained and interpreted in the same way the notion of war has continued to receive extra attention. However, by the same token, most especially in military circles, there appears to be currently no other standardization or principle disproportionately distorted or misconstrued, even by the so-called experts. This sensationalism has not helped proportionality as a responsive action always attracting rational evaluation.

One may not find anything wrong in 'tit for tat', including balanced revenge or retribution from one state against another, but towards ensuring the rationality of self defense, proportionality must be driven by the motive of the threat or attack, including the derivation. However, the very version of military proportionality takes the centre stage once physical exchanges or aggression starts between state actors, hence evoking the International Law of Armed Conflict (LOAC) or Law of War. Consequently, proportionality is specifically hinged on the imbalance between military advantage and civilian risk, hence relegating the attack outcome to the background, but rather whether the attacker or military commander ordered the attack based on a reasonable proportionality assessment when the bomb was let off, hence the 'reasonable commander test'. Proportionality during war time amongst state actors, does not thrive on whether the level of force used was in fact proportional (JINSA: <https://www.lawfire.com>, Blog 2023). The depredations and savage of war overtime in human history appears to have migrated from the condiment of brutish paraphrenia on exhibition, into the corridors of a somewhat orderly, humane and at least respectful engagement guarded by certain laws and routine. Somehow, it may appear absurd and equally a misnomer for the law of proportionality as a very important etiquette of the conduct and ruses of war to blatantly and deliberately choose to overlook what should always present as a fair conclusive assessment (the duration, degree and amount of damage deliberately inflicted on an enemy as a reprisal action within a given time), and rather highlight the momentary rationality on both the need for such response, including the sort and manner, thereby rendering 'effect-based' condemnations legally invalid. In so far as an attack was conducted based on a legitimate military objective, even on a certified civilian target or outfit, hence the attack decision, but not attack outcome, suffice it to observe that the law of proportionality stands.

A balanced assessment standpoint examines the commander's intent (deliberate attack on civilians thereby abhorring all initiative measures preventing civilian casualties; attack on confirmed enemy target, or finally implemented all designate measures prior to attack to prevent or minimize civilian

casualties. An attack commander within the hierarchical structure, naval, military, air force, and artificial intelligence driven, nowadays appear to be finding it increasingly more difficult, sequel to not only the presenting terrain of today's conflicts and war (the urban area), but the destructive lethality of modern ordinances, wholesomely complicated by 'enemy tactics of hiding among civilians, with the intention of exacerbating risks' (Geoffrey.com: JINSA, 2023).

In the same way the doctrine of proportionality has affected conflictual issues, the courts, domestic and international horizon have utilized it on a wide variety of disputes relating to collective self defense', as long as the international laws of armed conflict are upheld. When the International Court of Justice (ICJ) ruled in 1997 in a landmark case involving the use of River Danube by both Hungary and Slovakia, that Slovakia's response was not a proportionate counter measure (amid environmental concerns) hence deprived Hungary of a shared vital resource, more awareness was created on the possible limit of proportionality as a doctrine, principle and law. Realistically broad as it is, the concept of proportionality drawn within the corridors of the present study undoubtedly fall within the operational heuristic compass of Law of Armed Conflict and International Humanitarian Law, hence guided by the following steps: determination, planning, analysis, and execution, and subjected and justified by the reasonable military commander standard as to justify a military attack and avoid committing a war crime (James Burkart, 2016). Because 'militaries do not have unlimited authority to attack any target they deem advantageous' (Jacquelyn Carole, 2022), pre- and post-assessment must undertake target validity and legality *vis a vis* military objectives, since only military objectives can be the subject of an attack (James Burkart, 2016). Civilians or not, 'those which by their very nature, location, purpose or use make an effective contribution to military action' (James Burkart, 2016), cannot be exonerated.

The most important principal in laws of war is the effort to limit warfare to the combatants and to protect civilians when possible. It is illegal to target civilians in a war unless there is a compelling military utility to do so. Even then, the amount of force used must be proportional to the military gain, and only the necessary amount of force can be used (Goldstein & Peterhouse, 2011).

Regardless of this taint of ambiguity, more so as regards battle ground exchanges and excesses, the very clear aspect is that; just as the face of war has kept transforming, such principle guiding or bordering it can never remain static.

Undoubtedly, the Israeli/Palestinian conflict present a good scenario of a 'Trapped Conflict' (Collier & Sambaris: 2002), hence this study easily utilized its analytical indices towards elucidating the causal origins, its incremental scope and severity, including the strong grievances motivating both contending parties to fight. Moreover, towards furthering, actualizing, and sustaining the US foreign policy nonetheless unapologetic as regards its stance on Israeli all round support, lasting peace appears ineffectual since existing indices prevent such. For both Palestinians and Israel, compromising negotiations remain a far cry even as complementary relationship as neighbours is eclipsed by the lack of fraternal confidence.

Reflections

Issues concerning the Israeli/Palestinian debacle for years has maintained a daily trend on the global platform. Attempt at peaceful resolution of this imbroglio has spanned for years, beginning with an official agreement titled, 'The Declaration of Principles on Interim Self-Government Arrangements (DOP)' signed on 13th September 1993 at the White House lawn. By this agreement, a process was created to facilitate transfer of power and responsibilities in the Gaza strip and West Bank from Israel to the Palestinians through the '90s. Israel and Palestine have fought five wars, just as they are still engaged in one which started in 2023, while this study is going on. The first war, 1948 to 1949 came at the heels of the partition of Palestine and subsequent creation of the state of Israel, whereby just as the British were officially exiting Palestine, five Arab countries – Egypt, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, and Syria attacked Israel. The Middle East has relatively attracted more attention and global engagement more than any other region in the world post World War II. In all these, force of arms, diplomatic shuttles

and entanglement, terror infernos, peace treaties and agreement, multiple world leaders and powers have brain stormed, engaged and acted within diverse scenarios, attempting to solve this tactile, tangled and intractable mess, toughened by the extreme positions of both sides, and glaringly nurtured so to say, by the criminality that is identified with an array of Western powers and interests. Never a trial and error project, nor a paucity of negotiating skills and paradigm, rather;

“The reasons for this statement lie in the intrinsically intractable nature of the conflict; others, however, can be found in the broader politics that have enveloped it... personalities are of course important in history, but the Israeli-Palestinian peace process has long been the hostage of the impersonal and unyielding forces of history” (Sholom Ben-Ami, 2019).

Time, resource, blood, and energy have been spent enormously on the Israeli-Palestinian conundrum to the extent that reasonable solution should have materialized, rather, an equation that appear simple solving with the logic of two-state solution, has continued to defy solution. Why should the Israeli/Palestinian problem be allowed to continue generating global hiccup, curiosity, suspicion, tension, fear and insecurity, threatening peace on a wider panorama? Considering the generational dimension it has occupied, its inherent sustaining complexities, the subsisting gainers and loser in various ramifications, and very much aware of the exemplary roles a third party umpire should play in such a game, this study boldly posits that the Palestinian/Israeli problem would continue to intentionally remain unsolved as long as the US led western posturing and aggregated support for Israel emboldens it to disproportionately respond and react against its opponent. Existing issues elicit deeper negotiations understanding and official compromise desirous of immediate remarkable policy shifts from both sides, especially Israel who though appearing endangered, has continued to manifest a deceitful disarray cumulatively tied to its overriding advantage.

Needless reviewing the different governments that have led both the Palestinians and the Israeli post-1948 up till the present. However; that the two groups at one time or the other were sentimentally driven by either Zionist or pan-Arabic excesses is never in doubt, that political hardliners on both sides rather than ventured to heal the wounds of discord separating the two, only succeeded in widening it the more through domineering principles and policies is not equally in doubt, but equally, one could conclude that the Middle East in its brief history post-World War II, has felt the touch of transformative growth and development in all sectors, positive and negative simultaneously.

The astounding peculiarity of Israeli/Palestinian age long conflict lies in its outward simplicity and accompanying variegated contours, dictated by the deep-seated foreign interests and manipulations, hence in the words of Collier and Sambanis (2002) a Trapped Conflict, supported and sustained by those posing to be building and enabling peace. Following the October 7th 2023 Hamas attack on Israel, Gaza has witnessed: Starvation as a weapon of war, the bombardment of civilian hospitals, civilian shelters and refugee centres, residential buildings, constant air strikes, infrastructural and agricultural wilful damages, widespread and constant implementation of Administrative detention, forced separation of families, targeted assassinations among others. Civilians, children and women’s death toll count by the day, including the assassination of journalists and international aid workers. To decapitate Gaza, appears to be Israel’s war strategy, apportion security zones between different settlements, taking time to destroy and disjoint Hamas military tunnels which has robustly facilitated their wholesome challenge to Israel’s fire power in urban warfare. On the whole, Gaza has appeared as a lab for the Israelis to test run all their domination/apartheid engagement tools. Regardless of the predominant biased coverage from the mainstream news media that continue to dwell on the ‘Hamas attacker narrative’, members of the international community continue to overwhelmingly weigh down on the US led international Rule-based Order, and had a United Nations Security Council Resolution passed, ordering Israel and Hamas to negotiate a ceasefire for the month of Ramadan, the immediate and unconditional release of hostages, and the urgent need to expand the flow of humanitarian assistance (www.usip.org. 2024). Rather than encourage the realization of this collective momentary plan for peace, the United States boldly and flagrantly tagged this Resolution as ‘non-binding’, hence

encouraging Israel to possibly overlook it; a Security Council Resolution, a worthy encouragement and advice from the number one Democracy in the world who not only poses as a non-compromised umpire in Palestine/Israel conflict, but the lone voice propagating and financing global human rights and humanitarian aid?

The Geneva Initiative handles the Refugee Question, issues of ceasefire, reciprocity, proportionality and targeting civilians during warfare, including prisoners of war, among others (Goldstein & Peterhouse, 2011). For the records, Israel imports not less than 68 percent of its military weapons from the US, and 30 from Germany, while Canada and France are not left out (<https://www.theguardian.com>). When the West watches the weapons, they supply to Israel used on daily basis to snuff the life out of innocent Palestinians even as the International Court of Justice observed, ruled and ordered Israel 'to prevent its military from committing acts which might be considered genocidal' (www.togetherscotland.org, 2024), dangerous precedents are conspicuously being set. One may want to know which other better way fuels this conflict; that the US is publicly proving not in support of Israel in the latter's refusal of allowing some humanitarian aid into Gaza, and equally not supporting a strategic ceasefire? Surely, care for the ordinary Palestinian child, woman or civilian goes beyond the interest of external actors. That Nicaragua took Germany to the ICJ for being complicit with Israel in the genocidal drama unfolding in Gaza, equally shows how the Western 'status signalling, strategic spinning and military posturing' (<https://journals.sage.pub.com>, 2024) has degenerated into proving a stumbling block against peace. Supplying aid from Western donors to the endangered Palestinians under intense Israeli siege and bombardment using Western bombs is simply hypocritical.

Even with the detailed gains in today's technology in modern warfare, urban warfare goes with lots of complexities and challenges. Israel's assertion that Hamas continues to use Palestinians populations as human shield in Gaza may equally be seen as a mere camouflage to its genocidal acts. Proof of mass killings and the refusal of humanitarian aid shows intent to destroy Gaza, hence the Israeli position 'no one is innocent'. What has US grandstanding bound to gain, except dancing to the tune of the Israeli far right ultra-nationalists who manipulate through the Jewish lobby and in tandem with the pressure of the American evangelicals, flout the US brand here and there, bulldozing through protocols, discarding and deliberately misapplying international etiquettes and guidelines in favour of Israel. By the same way discussions on the unfolding Israeli atrocities in Gaza appear to have drummed the October 7th Hamas deadly attack on Israel currently on the international scene, undoubtedly, Israel is likely to achieve significant success in its present battle field engagement with Hamas, but it is headed towards losing the strategic side of it. One may want to know what Israel's global rating would be the day after the 2023/24 Gaza war.

It amounts to daring impunity and international recklessness if proper evaluation is made of the US posturing on account of Israeli affairs, most recently on the 2023/24 Israel's war on Gaza, this even challenges mere human rationality. Aiding, abetting and perceived to be supporting either the Palestinians or Israel in conducting existential and generational attacks on each other should portend a redline, and abhorred, or else how could proper healing be achieved with the hope of prospective peace, in future, quite aware that certain scars regenerate and fulminate ripple responses. Deeply frustrated as the Palestinians prove to be, sequel to detailed damming treatment meted unto them by the occupying power, Israel, worsened and complicated by the US double-standing and exceptionalism in the Middle East in particular, such spurs, enables and feeds the zeal and hunger for reactionary armed gangs, terror groups and proxies energized by state and non-state actors, and steered through extremism. Accustomed to constant raids and incarceration under dehumanizing conditions, just on a mere case of suspicion by Israeli agents, detained indefinitely under Administrative detention law; witnessed the several shooting and brutal killing of close relatives and the constant unlawful demolition of Palestinian homes, quite aware that exposure and experience remain vital determinants of violence quotient, suffice it to observe that covertly and overtly, the nature of tension, curiosity, fear and destruction spreading within Palestine has proved to be egregiously trapped with odious consequences.

It is alarming to observe that the US and its allies sees no fault with the Israeli policy of land-grabbing of more Palestinian lands through the bolstering of illegal settlements, deliberately altering the lawful demography of the zone. Forced confiscation of Palestinian lands through intimidation, punishment and attacks is illegal according to international law. Unfortunately, many states with opposing stance on these Israeli tactics, either keep mute or remain neutral, barring official reaction, not ready to entertain hostile relationship with Washington, considering its reach on the international realm. Falling in line and opting to remain 'good', supporting the hegemony of the bipolar rule-based order, against the 'evil' free world order as manifested through a multipolar setting, the many Israeli excesses go unchecked. Pecuniary national interests simply explain the retinue of western accomplices aiding the US in its defensive posturing in favour of Israel.

Double-standing, bullying and claiming to be protecting Israel is clearly selective positioning against most countries of the global south, and sustaining such campaign and narratives through proxy misinformation war in support of the Israeli occupation clearly incriminates an exceptional democracy indeed. The US approach in its strategic dimension, has entangled Israel and some key Arab nations, thus preventing an Arab/Palestinian force against Israel, thereby deliberately downgrading and stalling the urgency and seriousness such issues elicit to that of an ordinary conflict. The Palestinian identity is seriously and speedily eroded, hence querying the future of its nationality, having placed it in the hands of Israel, its adversary. This explains why this cause appears to have lost focus, momentum and value. Along this pedestal, the only country who it appears dares to ask questions, is Iran who through its policies and extremist proxies appear to contest the space with Israel and the US. This explains the Iranian threat not only against Israel, but against some of its Arab brothers and neighbours, seen as a case of regional hegemony. The defensive posture and incipient demonization of Iran, who used to act as the US preferred toy in the Middle East, pre-1979, may well be understood. From monitoring Iran's relationship with Russia and China, to scrutinizing its advances in its robust ballistic and nuclear programs, the US and its allies have continued to seek Iran's eventual acquiescence, hence the presenting scenario in the ongoing Israel's war on Gaza, whereby in a bid to checkmate Iran, apart from attacking Hezbollah in southern Lebanon, Israel committed a diplomatic blunder by flattening the Iranian embassy in Syria, on April 1st, 2023 (<http://www.newyorktimes.com>, 2024). In abeyance with deescalating regional tensions, however, Iran in retaliation to this provocative attack launched its first direct attack on Israel on 13th April, 2024. The US and its regional allies, helped contain and cushion this strike, having engaged in negotiations indirectly with Iran, determining and detailing the nature and timing of the expected Iranian response. In scoring a proportionate diplomatic response, Iran opted for Telegraphing and restraint as a de-escalatory application.

Posturing remains an admissible messenger for players and actors on the international scene to indicate and sensitize potential adversaries of intent and interests, towards initiating what could end up as deadly escalation. The long-crooked line of Palestinian/Israeli conflict present as indelible vestiges of the US and western allies disturbing distractions to lasting peace. One is bound to contain that the Middle East fragility will remain dominant so long as this tumour remain foreshadowed, but metastatically nagging. Disturbances, attacks, arrests and reprisals on Gaza and Westbank including cross border Israeli raids on Lebanon, Syria and Iraq have become a normal sequence for years now. It appears ridiculously paradoxical when the alleged victim, Israel, becomes the alleged attacker, while disregarding the rebuttals and directives of the United Nations collective security system. Not succumbing to sensational Western narratives, careful observation have continued to point at the demeaning depth of Israel's wholesome apartheid policies against the beleaguered Palestinian population.

Against all odds, Israel has come to survive as a strong entity in the midst of enormous enemies. The place of the US and Western assistance to Israel, cannot be underplayed, however some of these life line operate through camouflaged clandestine policies, bolstering Israel's defensive and offensive strategic response, and equally maintaining a stand in the regional great power rivalry equation, including sustaining the Western Military Industrial Complex. Impediments to peaceful resolution in the Palestinian/Israeli issues remain tactile and tangled considering the long-standing US deployment

of deceit, so to say incontestably, an avowed and outstanding third-party umpire whose neutrality status should be fair and exemplary; strategic flexibility and the court of public opinion expect the US to diligently goad the adversaries to a compromising peace. The US availing Israel more military and financial aid even as the latter refuses to heed to the former's suggestion of agreeing to the so-called temporary ceasefire with Hamas, showcases the failure of the power of actionable diplomacy.

October, 7th 2024 will continue to remain a land mark in Israel's history and an indelible response and reality in the life and annals of the Palestinians. That many Israelis were brutally attacked, wounded, either killed or held as captives by Hamas' Quasam Brigade is not in contention; that Israel reserves the full right to defend itself does not equally elicit any external permission, but how this is executed or carried out has a lot to make or mar the former primary incident, considering the more than seven months continuous and indiscriminate bombardment, siege and denial of humanitarian aid to Gaza. Citing these atrocities, the Government of South Africa made an official submission to the International Court of Justice against Israel, thereby drawing more public attention and scrutiny into this agelong imbroglio.

Already gazetted by the ICJ as 'a plausible case of genocide' (npr/www.kj.org, 2024), the US and its cohorts see no reason to caution or reprimand Israel in its excesses, disregarding the possible ripple effect on it at the international level. Merely urging recalcitrant Israel to scale down the level of engagement on one hand, while increasingly supplying it with the needed bombs and artillery shells, appears ambiguous. Through daily briefs from the US Foreign Secretary, reassurances of its solid support for Israel through thick and thin continue to embolden Israel even in its excesses, decreasing any chances of humanitarian ceasefire.

One is quite aware that the 1949 International Law of Armed Conflict specified certain guidelines supporting the methods and conduct of war, hence preventing descent into utter barbarism. The bid to 'exterminate Hamas from Gaza' going by the Israeli rhetoric and the consequent developments playing out, may not be far from an annihilating exercise in motion. From another angle, one may want to evaluate the justifiable gains accruable from the portent US posturing and the on-going disproportionate Israeli responses. Much has come to the visibility of the international community not only informing and assuring the Palestinians on their inalienable legal right to exist and operate. On the other sphere, the international community is irked to probe for, and are getting more akin and agitated to happenings in the Middle East, most especially young people and neutral minds seen cutting across the Jewish diaspora, including the American domestic scene, interrogating their national government official Palestinian engagement. Operating robust military facilities in all six of the gulf Arab states as well as in Syria, Iraq and Jordan and posing its largest of such in Qatar; parading such arsenal on the ground within the Middle East and aiding it with definite rhetoric supporting Israel and damning all justifications, one may want to justify why and how eventual peace would even be achieved? Factually, neither could exterminate the other thoroughly, rather, both would not be.

Recommendations

Denying the Palestinians the right of full membership of the United Nations may deny them the privilege of tabling their matters officially and legally to the global forum, but the US should be aware that such suppression still continues to create real and dangerous awareness, interest and sympathy to the detailed injustice trailing the Palestinian cause. The US policy statement welcomes the two-state solution to the Palestinian/Israeli issue, but unfolding development continue to project another different possible scenario emergent: Israel may have to reach an understanding with the remnants of the Palestinian government, form a merger, remain a federation, damning the prompts and directives of hardliners and extremists on both sides. 'It is only when Washington takes the issue of solving the Palestinian problem serious that anti-Americanism would substantially reduce in the Middle East' (Mearsheimer & Walt, 2007)

Prospective peace would be seen in the horizon when the US and its allies blatantly withdraw their posturing and financial support for Israel, just as the other Palestinian Arab neighbours including Qatar and Iran withhold their jihadist supportive excesses and finances to the Palestinians. The need for the two to coexist and compromise most of their hard stances would result. The sooner this is achieved, the better, because Israel may not continue enjoying the status of the dominant military power for long. Technology has predominantly changed battle field experiences and outcomes in the 21st century, hence altering choices, alliances and geopolitics. Deliberately weakening and delisting the Palestinian Arab from attaining a sovereign identity; profiling and subjugating them to inhuman status would always backfire, unleashing a frustrated bunch that would care less. Brandishing and festering extremist ideologies of Judaic/Zionism and pan-Arabic Islamism in all that relates to the Palestine enclave should be abhorred. Formulators and drivers of both US and Israel's foreign policies should revisit the pressure from the Jewish lobby on the US prompting this unconditional help and support, even leading to confrontations between it and Syria/Iran, while keeping in mind that on the long run, Israel could be seriously hurt (Mearsheimer & Walt, 2007). The Middle East, a vital and strategically important region, starring an array of ideologically dangerous states and nonstate actors, is all the more volatile as a sign of the United States failed foreign policy.

The ongoing 2023/2024 Israeli war on Gaza, complicated by the retinue of Israeli and Iranian counter military strikes on each other's facilities, though foggy with claims and counter claims meant for the gallery, should in sending messages across both adversaries, remind them that invasive option may not outrightly produce a clear-cut peace or winner in the Palestinians/Israeli crises. The duplicity in diplomatic circles exhibited by the rest of the western powers, reinforcing their commitment to Israel's security against Lebanon, Yemen, Syria and Iran, who remain victims of Israeli reckless attacks; 'those who have no right to defend themselves', appears absurd. Probably, the US government under Biden may not fully approve all of every tactic currently deployed by the Israeli War Cabinet, if anything is to be gauged based on myriads of defensive cautions seldom hissed out. Trending development between the US and Israel appears to be showcasing the brazen effrontery of a child whose father sent to steal another's property; is likely to end up hurting the US cumulatively on the long run, hence someone's dog revoltingly turning around to bite the owner. Moreover, 'in taking on different countries simultaneously, Israel reminds one of the Africans saying that if a dog has human backing, it can kill a monkey. The powerful countries using Israel as a hunter dog, also have a duty to put it on a leash so it does not constitute a danger to the society' (Owei Lakemfa, 2024)

Hopeless frustration could lead state or non-state actors in unyielding acts of resistance to stay determined in pursuit of capabilities and even fatalism towards the acquisition of nuclear weapons, if not for deterrence, to be at par with Israel, or at worst creating the possibility of enabling the sword of Damocles for any or both in a nuclear winter. The right of self-defence as a vital component of international law can never authorize states to blazingly annihilate one another. Could it be that the primary Israeli grand plan is the eventual removal of Palestinians from Palestine? Allowing Israel to singularly dictate to the Palestinians terms of peace is simply an audacity formulated and granted with the US blessing. The US, pressurized into sanctioning the *Netzah Yehuda*, a specialized Israeli battalion formed in 1999, where only male ultra-orthodox Jews serve, sequel to their crimes and human right violations in the occupied West Bank (BBC.com. US-Israel, 2024), though, may be emerging signs of domestic pressure. According to Tom Bateman, the Israeli Prime Minister in his audacious response vowed to resist such with all his might, exonerating them from such accusations. The only way to keep Israel safe is to make the Palestinians unsafe, going by the tenets of Zionism, hence the activities of settler illegal occupations continuously present graphic testament of maltreatment sponsored by American dollars that continue to fund the development of new Israeli settlements, example the non-governmental organization – One Israeli Fund.

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